

**Case** (The) of our English Wool, and the Manufacture thereof truly stated ; together with some of the Causes of the Low Price of the One, and the Decaying Condition of the Other, as also the Presentment of the Grand Jury of the County of Sommerset thereon, humbly offered to the High Court of Parliament, 4to., 8 pp., half calf, £2 5s

1685 [1681]

**[Clark (Geo.)]** The Case of our English Wool, and the Manufacture thereof truly stated ; together with some of the Causes of the Low Price of the one, and Decaying Condition of the other ; as also the Presentment of the Grand Jury of the County of Sommerset thereon, humbly offered to the High Court of Parliament, sm. 4to., pp. 8, half calf, £2 2s

[c. 1685]

The Author was upon the Jury mentioned, which styled the Factors of Blackwall-Hall "a Public Nuisance and Prejudice to the Clothing Trade and to have been the Ruine of many poor clothiers."

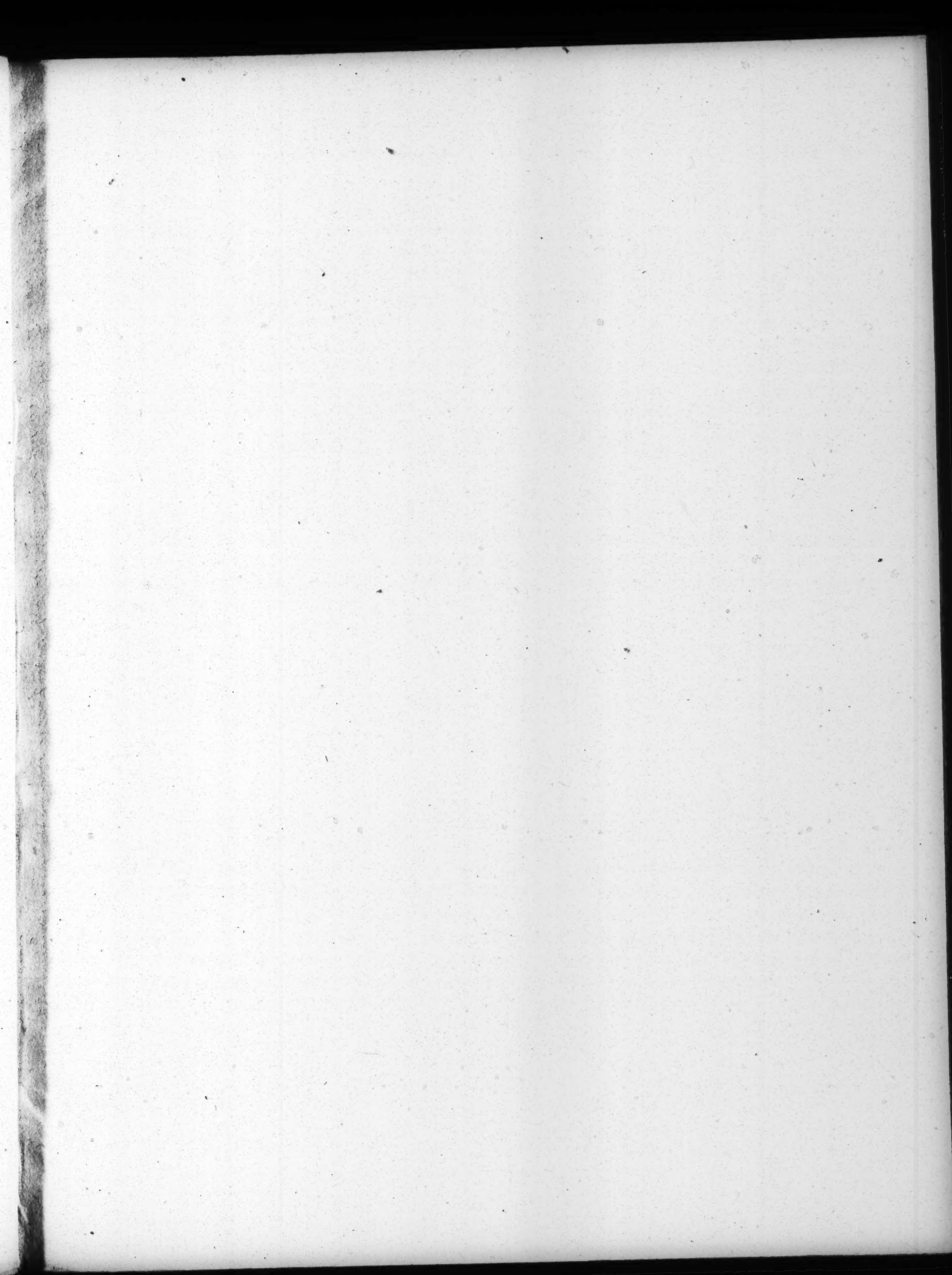
















c. 169- c. 7120 (I)  
*The Case of our English Wool; and the Manu-  
facture thereof truly Stated: together with  
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One, and decaying Condition of the Other. As  
also the Presentment of the Grand Jury of the  
County of Sommerfet thereon.* (1685)

*Humbly offered to the High Court of Parliament.*

1<sup>st</sup>. **I**T is notorious in Fact, that the Wool of the  
growth of *England* is the Greatest and Chiefest  
Staple Commodity of our Kingdom; and  
which for several years past is fallen above one half in  
its Price.

2<sup>d</sup>. It is manifest that the low price of our *English*  
Wool hath occasion'd a Fall and great Abatement both  
of the Rents and real Value of Land throughout the  
Kingdom, of near a Fifth part.

3<sup>d</sup>. It is as absolutely necessary to keep up the Rents  
and Revenues of the Kingdom, in reference to the Ho-  
nour, Strength, and Wealth thereof, as to support the  
Trade; there being now no way left to raise any confi-  
derable Summ of Money for a sudden and speedy Sup-  
ply, but by a Land Tax. It appears therefore to be our  
Interest, to enquire into the Causes of the low price of  
our Wool, and the decaying condition of this Ancient



Staple Commodity and Manufacture of our Kingdom.  
And they may be for the present considered under these Two Heads ;

1<sup>st</sup>. The great and vast quantities of *Spanish* and other Wool brought into this Kingdom yearly, without paying any Duty or Custom for the same, and here sold at very low Rates ; and the Cloth made thereof being for the most part consumed by the Subjects of this Kingdom, must of necessity lessen the Manufacture thereof, and so by consequence beat down the price of our *English* Wool.

2<sup>d</sup>. The great Abuses put upon our Clothiers, in the sale of their Cloth at *Blackwell-Hall* in *London*, by a company of Men sprung up there within these few years, called Factors, and who at this day have the sole management and command of the Cloth-Trade in their own Hands, and can dispose of it, and of any Man's particular Cloth and Stock as they please themselves, they having the Clothier, Draper and Merchant at their own beck, and who are now become the great Merchants for the *Spanish* Wool, &c. of whom the poor Clothier is forc'd to buy, the Factor having his Stock both of Cloth and Money in his own hands.

These are two of the Chiefest causes of the decay of this Trade, and the Low price of our *English* Wool at this time, both which are humbly offer'd for consideration, with some means for Redress, when it shall please this Honourable House to appoint the time.

By *Geo. Clark.*

Sommer-

*Somerſet. At the General Quarter Sessions of the Peace held at Brewton, in and for the County aforeſaid, on the Thirteenth day of January, in the Thirty Sixth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord Charles the Second, by the Grace of God of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, King, &c. The Preſentment of the Grand Jury there was as followeth; viz.*

**H**EARING the daily, ſad and lamentable Complaint of the greateſt part of the Clothiers of this County, concerning the great Decay of their Trade, whereby many of them within few years laſt paſt have been ruin'd and undone; and finding by ſad experience the great fall that is happened of late on the price of *Engliſh Wool*, that Commodity now yielding but little more than the one half the Value of what it was wont to be ſold for



at the beginning of the late unhappy Rebellion in this Kingdom ; And having seriously considered these things, do humbly conceive the Causes of these great Evils to be the Importation of *Spanish* and other Foreign Wools, without paying any Custom or Impost for the same ; And the great Abuses that have been put upon the Clothiers at the Principal Mart for Cloth in this Kingdom, by a sort of People called Factors ; Men first set up in the late Times of Distraction, and increasing ever since in Number and Power, till now at length they have gotten the sole Command and Sale of most mens Cloth brought thither to be sold ; And have thereby advanc'd themselves from little or nothing to be Men of great Estates, and as much impoverished their Masters, who sadly complain of these Abuses, and are left without prospect of a Remedy : The Consideration of which Mischiefs growing more and more upon us, and if not time-



timely prevented, being likely in the end to prove the Ruine of this ancient Staple Commodity and Manufacture of our Kingdom, hath caused us at this time to make this following Presentment.

First, That the Wool of this County in particular, as well as of the whole Kingdom in general, is the greatest Staple we have; And that which adds more to the Rents and Improvement of the Real Value of the Lands and Revenues thereof, than any one Commodity whatsoever; and that it is as much our Interest (if not more) to improve the Rents and Revenues of the Lands and Estates of this Kingdom, as to Maintain the Trade, without which Improvement we shall in no case be able to raise any considerable Sum of Money by a Land-Tax, if any sudden or extraordinary occasion should require it.

We Present therefore, That the Importation of *Spanish*, and other Foreign Wools,

Wools, without paying any Duty or Custom for the same, is a very great prejudice to the price of *English* Wool; and so consequently contributes much to the Abatements of the Rents and Profits issuing from Lands.

We Present, That the making of Wool-len Cloth is the greatest Manufacture of this Kingdom, and that wherein many thousands of poor People are employed and set to work, and thereby Relieved and Maintained; and that since the time that the Art of Clothing was first known amongst us, it has continued free, until the beginning of the late Rebellion, there sprung up a sort of People, who under the name of Factors of *Blackwell-Hall*, have gotten into their Power the Management and Disposal of most of the Cloth that is sold there: And besides, are grown to be the greatest Merchants of Oyl and Dying stuffs, but chiefly of *Spanish* Wool; all goods belonging to the Clothing Trade,  
of



of whom the Clothier is forced to buy, the Factor having his Stock both of Cloth and Money in his own hands; and therefore We present, that these Factors of *Blackwell-Hall* are a Publick Nufance and Prejudice to the Clothing Trade; and to have been the Ruine of many poor Clothiers, and the Causes of many other Mischiefs and Inconveniencies that now lye heavy upon us.

*Item*, We farther present, that this Honourable Bench will be pleased to implore the Royal Power and Prerogative of his Sacred Majesty for convenient Remedies to these great Abuses; and that this Presentment may be with all Submission presented to his Majesty as the Grievance and Complaint of the whole County.

*Thomas Ludwell,  
Joseph Gappy,  
Barnard Russ,  
William Ridcut,  
Thomas Pitman,  
John Bradny,*

*John Mulford Sen.  
Thomas Gapper Jun.  
Thomas Field,  
William Lewis,  
Thomas Biging,  
Thomas Harvy,*

*John Mabz,  
Wor. Brice,  
Henry Strode,  
Gabriel Iveleise,  
Robert King.*



(18)  
Ver. Cop. Ex per Ph. Bennet, Cl. Pac.

This is a true Copy of the Grand Juries  
Presentment, which we agree to, and de-  
fire it may be presented to his Majesty  
in Council by Mr Clark.

Weymouth, John Hunt. Will. Basset.  
Fitzharding. Ed. Berkely. Geo. Clarke.  
Fra. Powlett. Tho. Wyndham. Jo. Harington.  
E. Phelipps. Fra. Warre.

This Presentment should have been delivered to his  
Majesty King Charles the Second, but by  
his sudden Death it was prevented; And now  
comes more proper to be Considered of and  
Redress'd in Parliament; And at this time  
will enable the whole Kingdom in general to pay  
the present Taxes with greater Ease and Satis-  
faction (the Reasons being considered) than by  
any other way or means that can be offered.

FINIS



















